

Kentucky School for the Blind  
Louisville, Kentucky

Jefferson Co.

HABS No. 20-19

HABS

KY

56-Louvi,

2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 20  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

<sup>A</sup>Historic American Buildings Survey  
G. M. Grimes, District Officer  
304 Martin Brown Building  
Louisville, Kentucky

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Name of structure: Kentucky School for the Blind

Location: 1867 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

Owner or  
custodian: Miss Catherine Moriarity, Superintendent

Address: 1867 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

Date built:  
(approx) 1855

Architect  
or builder: F. Costigan

Present  
condition: Excellent

Number of  
stories: Five stories, and basement

Material used  
in construction: Foundation: Native stone.  
Exterior walls: Brick, stuccoed, except  
east and west annex, which are brick  
not stuccoed.  
Interior partitions: Brick and frame,  
plastered.  
Floors: Wood, covered with linoleum (some  
of them).  
Basement: earth.  
Roof: Frame construction, covered with  
standing seam tin.

Description:  
architectural  
and historical The portico on the south elevation has  
cast-iron columns and cornice. Floor  
and steps are of cut stone. All other  
cornices are of wood, box type, lined  
with tin.

The first story of the main body of the building  
on the south elevation is of cut stone, rusticated joints.

Above the main roof of the center portion of the building, a large dome rises above an octagonal base and is crowned with a circular cupola having eight columns. A similar cupola rises above the roof of each flanking wing of the main structure.

The interior of the building is generally very plain except for the two reception rooms and office on the second floor, which have ornamental plaster ceilings and carved wood heads over doors and windows.

The gymnasium on the third floor has a metal ceiling 25' x 8" above the floor. The room is equipped with an organ and is used for assembly purposes as well as for physical culture classes.

The building is equipped with two metal, enclosed type, spiral fire escapes, accessible from each floor.

This building is used for white pupils; another structure, which was not recorded, being used for colored.

The Kentucky School for the Blind was created by an Act of the General Assembly of Kentucky, approved February 5, 1842, entitled, "An Act to establish the Kentucky Institution for the education of the Blind" (First Annual Report, page 273, Kentucky Legislative Documents).

Two buildings in other locations were occupied by the school before this building was erected. The second building on Broadway, near First Street, burned in 1851. As a result the Kentucky State Legislature, in 1851, passed an Act providing for the erection of all the buildings necessary for the Institution. A plan for the new building was presented to the Commissioners, and unanimously approved, and presented to the Governor, who also approved it.

The Board of Visitors immediately appointed L. Ruffner and B. M. Patten (Superintendent) as the Building Committee.

From a report of the Building Committee, Kentucky Institution for the Blind, December 31, 1855, the following information was obtained.

The contracts for the various trades were let in detail, some of the lumber was purchased by the committee from mills in Mississippi at rates lower than existing in Louisville in an effort to minimize the cost of the structure.

Portions of the building were left unfinished to keep expenditures as low as possible; the cost being \$27,788.05, or \$633.99 more than funds available at the time.

The building was occupied by the pupils on October 8, 1855.

In 1862 the building was taken over by the Federal forces and used as a hospital. The school returned to the building on March 17, 1863, but full possession was not regained until June 5, 1863; more than seven months from the day on which the school were driven from it. (From Report of the Kentucky Institution for the Blind, 1843-1876)

*G. M. Grimes*  
Revised 1936 by H.C.F.